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Twelfth meeting of the Africa Regional
Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration
of Women in Development

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23 to 25 April 1991

REPORT ON ECA ACTIVITIES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT OVER THE PERIOD APRIL 1990 - APRIL 1991

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted in accordance with the 1990-1991 work programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It is the second of two reports to be submitted to the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) for the period covered by the work programme in order to enable ARCC members to evaluate the work done in the integration of women in development and to prepare guidelines for future programmes. The first report was submitted to the eleventh meeting of ARCC held in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in April 1990.

2. This report describes activities conducted in implementation of resolutions on women adopted by the sixteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers and by the United Nations General Assembly. It also describes the results achieved by ECA in carrying out its work programme, including the dissemination of information and co-operation with other institutions. The report finally gives a general overview of the orientations of the programme for the integration of women in development in the 1992-1997 Medium-term Plan and the programme for the forthcoming biennium 1992-1993.

3. The information contained in this report should enable ARCC to set priorities for the advancement of women in the region.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS

4. It should be recalled that the five resolutions adopted by the fourth ECA Regional Conference on Women in Development held from 6 to 10 November 1989 in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria were endorsed by the sixteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers/twenty-sixth session of the Commission held in May 1990 in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. These were:

(a) Resolution 684 (XXV) relating to the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s;

(b) Resolution 685 (XXV) on women and apartheid;

(c) Resolution 686 (XXV) on women in global and regional strategies;

(d) Resolution 687 (XXV) on the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development; and

(e) Resolution 697 (XXV) on the improvement of the role of women in informal sector production and management.

5. ECA ensured that these resolutions and those of the General Assembly concerning the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat were implemented. The efforts made in this regard are described in the following paragraphs.

Resolution 684 (XXV) Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s

6. By this resolution, the ECA Conference of Ministers endorsed the Abuja Declaration. In the same resolution, the Ministers appealed to member States and development organizations and agencies to ensure that the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration were implemented. They particulary requested ECA to disseminate widely the Abuja Declaration, follow-up its implementation and report thereon to subsequent sessions of the Commission.

7. In implementation of this resolution, ECA first distributed the text of the Abuja Declaration to member States and concerned institutions. It then sent out to member States suggestions concerning measures to be taken at the national level with a view to implementing the recommendations contained in the Abuja Declaration.

8. In addition to that, ECA conducted a campaign to educate people on the content of the Declaration. Meetings and field visits were organized to educate international opinion on the recommendations and objectives that African women set themselves for the 1990s. Some of the missions were fielded to Angola, Egypt, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Furthermore, ECA participated in the discussion of the role of women in development organized within the framework of the joint assembly of the European Economic Community and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (EEC/ACP) held in September 1990 in Luxembourg. ECA took advantage of this forum to describe the contents of the Abuja Declaration to representatives of EEC and ACP countries. Among the eminent persons invited to participate in this discussion, Her Excellency Madam Maryam I. Babangida, First Lady of Nigeria which had hosted the Abuja Conference, made a brilliant contribution to the dissemination of the Abuja recommendations.

9. Other activities focused on the preparation of a video film on the fourth ECA Regional Conference on Women and Development. The film which highlights the conclusions of the Conference will be released shortly. Finally, a book describing the situation of African women and highlighting their basic aspirations as reported by the 40 delegations from member States attending the ECA Conference in Abuja will be published in the not-too-distant future.

Resolution 686 (XXV) Women and apartheid

10. This resolution requested ECA to focus attention on women living under apartheid and to set up machinery for co-operating with countries of the Southern African subregion members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). During the period under review, consultations were held between the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) and the secretariat of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) as well as with the Interim Director of the MULPOC for that subregion. These consultations led to concrete proposals on the ways in which the greatest number of women could be involved in the planning activities of the two institutions and the formulation of specific programmes for women in the priority sectors of the subregion.

11. Also, an advisory mission was undertaken to Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. During that mission, activities relating to women and development in member countries of SADCC were discussed. In that regard, the discussions with the Namibian authorities showed how much the regime of apartheid had contributed to increasing the exploitation of women in Namibia. The

discussions also provided a clear assessment of the urgent needs of Namibian women, particularly with regard to the reintegration of displaced and jobless persons and access to health care, water supply, housing and education. It was also noted with interest that a unit dealing with women's issues had been set up in the Office of the President of the Republic, showing the degree of importance attached to such issues. The unit, run by five highly-qualified women, basically designs policies and programmes for the advancement of women and provides appropriate advice on the best strategies for translating them into action particularly where the incorporation of gender issues into national development planning was concerned. It works in close technical co-operation with all women's organizations located in the country. It should be pointed out that during discussions with Namibian women, the ATRCW mission provided useful advice on how women's issues could be properly planned for and co-ordination achieved between structures promoting the advancement of women and programmes of assistance to women. In that regard, it was considered necessary to plan study tours for Namibian women to travel to other countries of Africa in order to improve their knowledge by learning from the experiences of those countries.

Resolution 686 (XXV) Women in global and regional strategies

12. In this resolution, the Conference of Ministers recognized the importance of including women's concerns in global and regional development strategies so as to enable the effective participation of women in the process of economic recovery. The Ministers accordingly requested ECA to make sure that the conclusions of the Abuja Conference mentioned earlier were included in all negotiations relating to African development. The same resolution requested that a briefing session on the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP) should be organized for African women.

13. It was pursuant to this resolution that ECA accepted the invitation to participate in the EEC/ACP joint assembly discussion of the role of women in development mentioned earlier. ECA used this opportunity to educate ACP and EEC member States on African women's priorities so that those countries could take them into account in their future commitments to the African region. ECA also participated in the conference of the African-American Institute held in Cairo, Egypt from 7 to 10 January 1991. This was a very high level conference which mapped out the African policy of the United States of America. ECA used the occasion of the Conference to describe the situation of African women. It is interesting to note that the proposals advanced by the representative of ECA concerning ways and means of promoting the advancement of African women in the coming years secured the attention of the Conference.

14. Budgetary constraints did not enable a briefing session on AAF-SAP to be organized but in response to the concern of member States for information on the Framework, ECA plans to submit to ARCC, in the context of AAF-SAP a report on the role of women in agricultural and industrial product processing. The report will be introduced under agenda item 4(d) and will duly take into account the comments of ARCC members before being distributed to all member States.

Resolution 687 (XXV) On the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development

15. The resolution appeals to ECA to increase the material and human resources of ATRCW in order to enable it to serve ARCC more effectively. In response to that appeal, ECA proposed to its policy organs that the post of a regional adviser responsible for women's advancement issues

should be created. The creation of the post will help to improve the assistance given to member States and ARCC.

16. It is within this vein that the Gisenyi MULPOC has recently secured a regular budget post at the P-2 level for an expert responsible for the advancement of women in the subregion of the Great Lakes countries. The effort of the Gisenyi MULPOC to ensure the continuity of the subregional women's programme is highly commendable and should be followed by other MULPOCs. That post and the other North African MULPOC post financed by the Government of Egypt will make a significant contribution to the efforts being made to strengthen subregional and national structures for the advancement of women in the two subregions. Similar efforts are expected from other subregions.

Resolution 697 (XXV) Improvement of the role of women in informal sector production and management

17. This resolution was principally addressed to member States with the Conference of Ministers requesting them to take informal sector activities into account in their development plans and programmes and to make every effort to create an enabling environment for the promotion of the activities of businessmen and businesswomen in the sector. What was more, the resolution urged member States to take appropriate measures not only to ensure the continuity of the project on the improvement of the role of women in the informal sector (after international organizations will have withdrawn their financing) but also to ensure the mobility of national project co-ordinators.

18. In this regard, it will be recalled that the project in question has been implemented by ECA since 1988 in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Institute for Training and Research for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Statistical Office (UNSO) with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project is being conducted in four pilot countries, namely Burkina Faso, the Congo, the Gambia and Zambia over a four-year period. To date, case studies have been conducted highlighting the situation of women informal sector operators in terms of the political, legal, technical and statistical environment under which they operate. Activities undertaken within the context of the project over the period under review are described as part of the implementation of the ECA work programme.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/77 on improving the status of women within the Secretariat

19. The improvement of the status of women serving in ECA secretariat aroused particular interest during the period under review. The intensified interest came pursuant to resolution 44/77 of the General Assembly calling on all organizations within the system to take the necessary steps to increase the number of women in the professional category and also with the taking of decisions in line with previous resolutions of the General Assembly. Indeed, resolution 40/258 of December 1986 and others following it requested that the percentage of women in the United Nations should be increased by 1990 and that specific targets should be set every five years with a view to making concrete improvements in the condition of women working in the United Nations system.

20. In that spirit, ECA set up a task force of high level officials to advise the administration on measures to be taken to improve the situation of women professionals in ECA and to see to it that

the measures proposed were implemented. The task force went directly to work to ensure the implementation of the General Assembly resolution mentioned earlier. Thanks to the understanding which prevailed within the task force and the co-operation of the ECA administration, 10 posts (two of them managerial) were reserved for women. Most of those posts have already been filled, bringing the percentage of women from 11.2 to 17.2 in record time.

21. The efforts of ECA have been highly appreciated and deserve to be encouraged.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT OVER THE PERIOD MAY 1990-APRIL 1991

22. As in the previous year, the activities programmed for ATRCW and for other substantive divisions of ECA over the period under review centred around three issues, namely:

(a) Participation of women in development;

(b) Improvement of the skills and opportunities of women; and

(c) Dissemination of information on women and development.

23. These activities were carried out in line with the work programme and to the satisfaction of member States. They are described in further detail in the following chapters.

Participation of women in development

24. One of the abiding concerns of ECA is to ensure that the needs and interests of women are reflected in national development plans. In this regard, ATRCW took care to disseminate widely the guidelines for the inclusion of women's concerns in national development plans. In addition to that, consultations were held with four countries and with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) with a view to making sure that a women's component was included in the respective plans and programmes of the countries.

(a) Advisory missions

(i) ATRCW fielded missions to Angola, Kenya, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The purpose of those missions was to impress upon member States the importance of placing women's issues in the high-profile area of national planning and decision making. It was observed that even when the interests of women were reflected in development plans and programmes, problems persisted at the level of implementation. Indeed, gender issues were often relegated to second place particularly when it came to resource allocation. This attitude led to an insufficiency of resources that significantly reduced the capacity of women to act. This state of affairs was worsened by the sheer number of women's organizations which made any attempt at co-ordination and control a difficult exercise. Added to that was the lack of adequate training in the techniques of managing and administering development programmes. This

was becoming increasingly evident in those structures responsible for the integration of women in development;

(ii) The missions ended with the identification of areas requiring more attention in each of the countries visited and at the regional level. All the persons contacted were unanimous in their view that more intensive and sustained co-operation needed to be established between ATRCW and the member States.

(b) Inclusion of a Women's Component in the IDEP work programme

(i) IDEP expressed its desire to institute a women's component in its activities. ATRCW provided relevant advice and information for the preparation of a project on that issue. The project would have to address the needs of member States in terms of training women leaders and women officials in development planning;

(ii) It should be recalled that IDEP is a bilingual institution set up in 1963 by the ECA Conference of Ministers to develop Africa's manpower potential in order to address the need of member States for skilled manpower. IDEP has already trained a large number of economic advisers and planners within the context of its programme which is composed of:

a. A two-year training course leading to the diploma in applied studies in economic development and planning;

b. Short-term training programmes on selected topics;

c. Advisory services and documentation.

(iii) The project formulated aims at encouraging African women to participate more and more in the regular programme of IDEP. Emphasis is also laid on direct IDEP assistance to member States in accordance with their needs.

Improvement of women's skills and opportunities

25. The improvement of women's skills and opportunities is another abiding concern of ECA. During the period under review, activities in this area were directed at research, the organization of seminars and the launching of pilot projects. In keeping with past practice, the efforts focused on rural development, the informal sector and the access of women to credit. Those activities were the outcome of the combined effort of various substantive divisions of ECA.

Women in rural development

26. Since rural development and agriculture constitute a priority sector, ECA has paid sustained attention to the sector. The activities conducted in this area are summarized below:

(a) Women in the rural areas: rhetoric versus reality

27. The study was conducted with a view to demonstrating the extent to which the interest expressed in strategies and resolutions were reflected in the actual implementation of those resolutions and whether they had achieved any real impact. On the basis of women's living conditions in the rural areas, the study reviewed the various resolutions and strategies on women in order to ascertain the extent to which these reference documents directly addressed the specific needs of rural women who constituted a major percentage of the African population. The study went on to demonstrate the manner in which the implementation of the resolutions took rural women into account. The significance of the study lies in the analysis which highlights the gap between the making and honouring of commitments. Copies of the study may be obtained from the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division.

(b) Report on proposals for improving the role of women in the production, processing, packaging and marketing of food products in West Africa

28. This report is one of the documents prepared by the Niamey-based MULPOC for submission to its Committee of Officials. Its main purpose was to stimulate discussion of measures likely to improve the participation of women in the efforts to increase agricultural production and productivity in the subregion. The document underscores the preponderant role that women in West Africa play in producing foodstuffs, fishery products, rearing sheep and goats and processing and marketing those products. The document also demonstrated that women played a capital role in desertification control and soil conservation which were issues of great importance given the fact that most countries of the subregion were affected by creeping desertification. The recommendations made on these issues by the Council of Ministers will be used in preparing a programme designed to strengthen the role of women in the agricultural sector of the subregion.

(c) Women and the environment

29. The environment is requiring increasing attention on the continent. ATRCW is particularly interested in this sector because African women (who are mostly farmers) suffer severely from the effects of environmental degradation.

30. Even though ECA has not yet developed an environmental programme specifically for women, it must be stressed that General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has encouraged the involvement of all strata of society in environmental programmes. In this regard, the Group of 77 has especially emphasize the need for women to participate in environmental development programmes.

31. ECA therefore intends to associate women in the pursuit of the objectives of the environmental programme for Africa which essentially aims at:

(a) Increasing policy formulation and decision-making capabilities where environment-related issues were concerned; and

(b) Increasing the institutional capacities and human resources involved in the implementation of environmental programmes.

Women and entrepreneurship

32. In line with the measures for promoting and strengthening African entrepreneurship advocated in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) 1986-1990, activities aimed at improving and enhancing the performance of women entrepreneurs have received increased attention.

(a) Study on the integration of women in formal and informal business sectors

33. The study is one of the documents prepared for the forthcoming Conference of African Ministers of Trade. It is intended to provide Ministers with the information they need to work out a policy for the promotion of African women in the trading sector. In this regard, the study identifies the areas in which women predominate and the reasons which motivate them. It also highlights the constraints with which women have to cope and formulates recommendations for enhancing their contribution to trade. The study is available in the International Trade and Development Finance Division of ECA.

(b) Report of the seminar on management training for women heads of enterprises (15 October - 9 November 1990, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

34. The seminar was organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 15 October to 9 November 1990 as part of the Finnish Programme for Development and Co-operation (PRODEC) in co-operation with the ATRCW, ITFD, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Trade and the International Trade Centre (ITC/UNCTAD/GATT). Participating in the seminar were 17 businesswomen from nine English-speaking countries of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA). The purpose of the seminar was to train those women in business management and foreign trade.

35. According to the initial plan, the seminar was, among other things, to create trading links among a number of selected participants and Finnish trading firms specializing in areas of interest to participants. During the four weeks it lasted the seminar covered a range of topics including entrepreneurship, business management, financial management, marketing and negotiations. Computerized simulation methods were also used during the seminar by the Ethiopian Management Institute and visits organized to the leather industries in Addis Ababa. The results of the seminar exceeded every expectation and the participants took the initiative of establishing a communication and export network among themselves. They also resolved to work for the establishment of a similar network among their respective countries. They reaffirmed that courage and determination were the best means of overcoming the many constraints they had to face in the world of business. The detailed report of the seminar can be obtained from PRODEC or the International Trade and Development Finance Division of ECA.

(c) Preparatory work for the Expert Group meeting to consider the modalities of creating an African Association of Businesswomen entrepreneurs (27 to 30 May 1991, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

36. In the concern to promote and facilitate trade among businesswomen within subregional and regional economic grouping, ECA is organizing this meeting of experts which will last four days in Addis Ababa. The purpose of the meeting is to design a mechanism that will help to intensify contacts among businesswomen beyond the borders of their countries. The mechanism will help

to expand the scope of African businesswomen and create a spirit of solidarity which can only strengthen the impact of their activities in the region.

37. The participants will be drawm from governmental, non-governmental and international organizations as well as from professional women's associations. The discussions of the meeting will focus on issues of importance to businesswomen, more particulary on:

(a) The role of businesswomen in economic development;

(b) Issues relating to associations of African businesswomen;

(c) Networking among African businesswomen; and

(d) Modalities for establishing an African association of businesswomen entrepreneurs.

(d) Seminar on the development of the capabilities of businessmen in cottage and small-scale industries, with particular emphasis on the role of women in industrial development

38. The seminar forms part of the activities listed in the work programme of the Industry and Human Settlements Division of ECA. It aims basically at providing participants with a forum for discussing the following.

(a) Small cottage industries in developing countries and their role in industrial development; and

(b) Project ideas, resource availability and advisory services for small-scale cottage industries.

39. At the time of writing this report, no seminar had yet taken place. It was planned that the seminar for English speaking countries would be organized in April or May 1991 while that for French-speaking countries will be held in November 1991. It was also felt that participation in the seminar would be limited to nationals of countries members of the Islamic Development Bank which was financing both seminars.

(e) Improving women's access to credit

40. With funding from the Government of Sweden, ATRCW pursued the implementation of the project on improving the access of women to credit through training in management techniques and credit access.

41. During this period, emphasis was laid on demonstrating the usefulness and justification of the measures proposed for accessing women to credit in the pilot project mounted in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. Groups of women were identified to constitute the pilot project and were provided with training, using assistance from national institutions and experts. The courses developed earlier for this purpose were used as basic training documents. Other activities were subsequently conducted in the following sequence:

(a) Mobilization of savings within the group and use of such savings to secure more substantial credit from financial institutions;

(b) Identification of project ideas with the help of the group;

(c) Development of such project ideas into bankable projects;

(d) Establishment of links between the group and the banks, particularly with the opening of an account in a bank so that the group became bank customers and qualified for bank loans;

(e) Search for bank financing of the projects formulated;

(f) Establishment of enterprises or production units; and

(g) Follow-up of the project through advisory, training and other services.

42. Within the context of the pilot project mounted in Uganda, the people trained identified eight groups of women for whom bankable projects were formulated and submitted to the co-operative development bank for financing. In the case of Ethiopia, the 10 women trained set up a co-operative and developed a cattle fattening project which has already secured financing from the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank. The co-operative plans to expand its activities to poultry farming and horticulture. The group of women trained has also been asked to provide guidance to women working in a World Bank project on the small-scale businesses of market women in Addis Ababa.

43. With regard to Rwanda, activities have been delayed for some time. Because the group of women identified to constitute the pilot projects resided in prefectures far from the capital, the events which occurred in that country have slowed down the implementation of the project. Therefore, the project staff are still in the process of being trained.

44. It should be underscored that the project was evaluated during a round-table meeting held at Kampala on 21 and 22 November 1990. Ethiopia and Uganda participated in the round-table discussion as beneficiaries while ECA participated as executing agency. The evaluation was positive and recommendations were made to continue project activities in order to secure an impact in the countries.

45. As the funding of the project by the Swedish Government will end in March 1991, efforts have been intensified in order to mobilize funds to continue the activities and to replicate the project in other countries.

Women in the informal sector

46. Several activities have been undertaken in the sector, specifically in the context of the ATRCW project on improving the role of women in informal sector production and management, which is currently being executed in four pilot countries, namely: Burkina Faso, the Congo, the Gambia and Zambia.

47. During the period under review, national seminars, each lasting four days, were organized in four pilot countries in September/October 1990. The seminars attended by senior officials

responsible for planning and directing development programmes and for national machinery for the integration of women in development, had the following objectives:

(a) To review the conclusions of case studies as well as summaries of country studies on policies, training and statistics;

(b) To formulate action plans aimed at promoting informal sector activities; and

(c) To prepare guidelines for setting up pilot projects.

48. During the seminars, the experts appraised the situation of women in the informal sector in each country. The action plans and areas defined for the pilot projects were in line with national priorities.

49. It should be emphasized that in view of the dimension and complexity of the project and the involvement of various agencies, it is supervised at the ECA level by a local follow-up committee and at the system's level by the steering committee chaired by UNDP which finances the project. These committees, therefore, meet regularly to monitor the progress of the project. It should be noted that an initial tripartite review of the project took place in November/December 1990. This evaluation reviewed the results achieved but also pointed out some difficulties which require the attention of the various agencies concerned.

Dissemination of information on women and development

50. Another major task of ECA is to disseminate information on women and development. To this end, ATRCW has a reference unit which has a wealth of documentation on African women. Under this unit, two issues of the journal ATRCW Update were published in June and December 1990. The issues, as they should, contained information on the activities undertaken by ECA in the context of its programme for the advancement of women, and information on research and training opportunities for African women.

51. The Reference Unit of ATRCW also prepared bibliographical notes on books published by women. This document is the first of a series of bibliographies to be published regularly. In order to produce a document of useful quality, ATRCW plans to establish links with national documentation centres and the computer documentation system of ECA (PADIS) and its network.

52. Finally ATRCW has continued its effort to update the directory of African experts. The new edition of the directory will be published before the end of 1991. The document will be very useful, particularly for consultancy services in Africa, in the context of promoting technical co-operation among developing countries.

IV CO OPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

53. Co-operation with other institutions had been in conformity with the recommendations of the Arusha and Nairobi strategies for the advancement of women. In this regard, ATRCW has participated in a number of activities organized by other institutions. Such fora have been used as a medium for drawing attention to the needs and priorities of African women.

54. During the period under review, ATRCW participated in the following meetings: the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in Vienna from 27 February to 10 March 1991, followed by the Inter-agency Meeting on Women and Development, from 13 to 15 March 1991; the meeting of the Governing Council of INSTRAW in Santo-Domnigo from 19 to 24 February 1991 and held consultations with UNIFEM. The conclusions reached by these meeting and consultations will be contained in a separate report which will be presented under agenda item 4(c).

55. Besides these annual meetings, ATRCW has participated in seminars, meetings and workshops which it considers as relating to sectors of interest to the region. They include meetings on women refugees, small- and medium-scale enterprises, an evaluation of rural development experiences in Africa, the informal sector, renewable sources of energy and statistics.

Meeting of an expert group on refugee and displaced women and children, held in Vienna, from 2 to 7 July 1990

56. Pursuant to resolution 34/2 adopted by the thirty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, this meeting of experts was organized with a view to examining the problems which refugee women and children would be facing in terms of immediate protection and relief as well as of rehabilitation and more lasting programmes. The discussions of the meeting centred on protection and assistance, with particular emphasis on the situation of such vulnerable groups as unaccompanied under-aged children and the disabled. The recommendations of the meeting called for increased attention to problems of physical and moral violence, malnutrition, health care and rehabilitation. Measures were proposed for the absorption of refugees and displaced persons into normal active life. The report of the meeting can be obtained from the Commission on the Status of Women, in Vienna.

Preparatory meeting for the 1991 conferences sponsored by the world assembly of small- and medium-scale enterprises, held in Addis Ababa, from 15 to 17 October 1990

57. This consultative meeting was organized in Addis Ababa from 15 to 17 October 1990 with a view to making preparations for three conferences scheduled for 1991 under the auspices of the World Assembly of Small- and Medium-scale Enterprises (WASME). The three conferences are:

(a) The Conference of Executive Directors of organizations for the development of small-scale industries;

(b) The second African symposium on small- and medium-scale industries; and

(c) The workshop on trade expansion through the development of small-scale industries.

58. Represented in the meeting were two member countries namely: Ethiopia and Zambia as well as all the agencies concerned with the preparation of the conferences, that is, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

59. The meeting arrived at the following conclusion:

(a) That the conference of executive directors of organizations for the development of small-scale industries should be held in Blantyre, Malawi, in September 1991. About 70 participants are expected, mostly heads of organizations for the promotion of small-scale industries. UNIDO will be the major contributor to the organization of the meeting;

(b) That the meeting of the second African symposium on small- and medium-scale enterprises should be organized in close co-operation with ECA in February/March 1992. The major objective of the meeting will be to formulate strategies and programmes for promoting entrepreneurship in Africa and to speed up the growth of small- and medium-scale enterprises. A total number of 152 participants are expected at the meeting. Women will also be invited to participate in large numbers, particularly during the debate on development of entrepreneurship among women. The venue of the symposium has not yet been decided;

(c) That the workshop on trade expansion through small- and medium-scale enterprises in Africa, which will be organized in co-operation with UNCTAD is aimed at formulating strategies and practical methodologies for increasing the contribution of small- and medium-scale enterprises to the expansion of African trade. The meeting will have about 200 participants and will be held at the beginning of November 1991 in a country yet to be determined. The participation of women in all these conferences is highly recommended.

The round-table meeting on the mobilization of the informal sector and non-governmental organizations for recovery in development: policy and management issues, organized from 3 to 7 December 1990 at Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria

60. The round-table meeting was the twelfth Conference organized by the African Association for Public Administration and Management. The meeting was attended by governmental and non-governmental experts to discuss the role of the informal sector in recovery and development in Africa. The conference also addressed the role of African women in the informal sector, their problems and prospects.

61. The experts sometimes had heated debates on the issue. At the end of the conference, an appeal was made for the infrastructure of the informal sector to be improved in order to promote and facilitate its activities.

Regional inter-governmental workshop on the evaluation of rural development experiences in Africa, held in Addis Ababa 19 to 24 November 1990

62. The workshop was organized by the Joint ECA/FAO Agricultural Division (JEFAD) with a view to stimulating discussion on rural development, an important subject for African countries, especially under the current context of structural adjustment. The Workshop was attended by 72 Africans and non-Africans.

63. The issues discussed centred on:

(a) Policies and strategies for participatory rural development in Africa;

(b) Redirecting and strengthening popular participation;

(c) Use of participatory methods in planning the preservation of national resources;

(d) Training and general education for participatory development;

(e) Guidelines for planning participatory rural development programmes in Africa;

(f) Organization and management of credit plans for the poor at the grass-roots level in Africa;

(g) Follow-up and evaluation methods for beneficiaries.

64. On the whole, all the themes centred on promoting popular participation in all programmes and actions undertaken in the rural areas. The Workshop demonstrated, inter alia, that the resolution to rural development problems can only come from the people concerned.

Workshop on women and renewable energy, held in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 1 to 7 December 1990

65. The workshop was organized by the International Energy Foundation in co-operation with INSTRAW, UNDP, the Solar Energy Research Centre in Tripoli, IT Power Limited of Great Britain, The African Regional Centre for Solar Energy, ECA, and the ILO-Turin Training Centre.

66. The Workshop brought together representatives from Algeria, Angola, Libya, Syria and Tunisia. Also in attendance were the representatives of IT Power Limited of Great Britain, INSTRAW and UNDP.

67. During the Workshop, participants were familiarized with the harnessing of solar, wind and biogas energy as well as their applications. It was recommended that measures be taken to enable women to exploit renewable sources of energy. In addition to the stimulation of participant interest and their training in the subject, it was strongly recommended that solar and wind energy equipment should be locally manufactured and campaigns and exhibitions organised to promote the use of such equipment.

68. ATRCW intends to maintain a sustained relationship with the International Energy Foundation, which will help to encourage African women to increase their involvement in the sciences, as recommended by the Abuja Declaration.

V. REVIEW OF THE 1992 - 1993 MEDIUM- TERM PLAN AND THE 1992 - 1993 WORK PROGRAMME ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN AFRICA

69. It should be noted that the General Assembly has approved the formulation of sub-programme for the promotion of women with effect from the 1992-1997 medium-term plan. This is an extremely important step in the integration of women in development. In fact, until this new event, the integration of women in development had been treated as part of social development programmes and humanitarian questions. Henceforth, it will be a subprogramme in its own right as the agricultural development, and human resources development and other subprogramme.

70. This measure does not in any way affects preceding resolutions which requested all the regional commissions to see to it that women's interests were reflected in all their work programmes. Accordingly, women's issues will continue to be dealt with directly by the various substantive divisions of ECA in addition to the women's advancement activities entrusted to ATRCW, which remains the liaison office handling all matters concerning women and development.

71. One other point worth mentioning is that within the framework of the 1992-1993 work programme, ECA plans to recruit a high-level regional adviser for the African women's advancement programme in order to strengthen ECA's capacity to render assistance to member States.

72. Rightly, the 1992-1997 medium-term plan, like the 1992-1993 work programme, are based on the global and regional recommendations and strategies for the promotion of women; namely: the Arusha and Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD), the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP) and the Abuja Declaration on participatory development: the role of African women during the 1990s.

73. In the spirit of these strategies, the programme centres on questions of promotion and planning to serve the cause of women, their involvement in decision-making and their central role in development, macro-economic analyses on the role of women in such production sectors as agriculture, the agro-industries and on the identification of statistical indicators that would help member States to formulate policies aimed at increasing the effective participation of women in the socio-economic development of their countries. As in the past, this plan and programme lay emphasis on advisory services, training, research and information dissemination.

VI. CONCLUSION

74. As can be seen from the report, ECA has secured the implementation of all the activities programmed. What is more, it has seen to it that the resolutions of the ECA Conference of Ministers and the United Nations General Assembly are implemented. The goals of the strategies for the promotion of all the roles of the African women have also been pursued.

75. ECA's success in accomplishing this immense task during the period April 1990 - April 1991 has been made possible by financial assistance from Egypt (which has continued to finance the services of the expert responsible for women's questions in the Tangier MULPOC), Gabon, the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development and bilateral sources, particularly the Swedish and Finnish Governments, the Ford Foundation and the International Energy Foundation.

76. Finally, the programme has benefited from the co-operation and assistance of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Institute for Training and Research for the Advancement of Women, the International Labour Office and the United Nations Statistical Office. This spirit of co-operation is highly appreciated.